

Eagle Mountain group fights power pole plan

Residents say sticking electric lines in front of their homes would ruin property values

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PROVO - Eagle Mountain wants to create parking strips for a string of power poles along the edges of a few front yards.

The residents of those properties, who live just off the east side of Lake Mountain Drive, a dirt road in the long stretch of bare land between the city's north and south ends, don't like it.

They've taken the issue to Provo's 4th District Court, where on Wednesday they asked a judge not to allow the city to immediately occupy the land.

Power poles in their front yards, they say, would not only ruin property values and hurt their quality of life, but it would also make little sense. A towering set of 345-kilovolt lines already runs behind homes on the road's west side. The homeowners want the city to follow that corridor.

But the city says it can't.

That corridor belongs to Rocky Mountain Power, and there is not enough room for the city's lines without stringing wire directly over the roof of at least one of two homes.

The new city-owned corridor would cross Kim and Karen O'Donnell's rescue farm where they rehabilitate discarded animals.

The O'Donnells say the city erred when it allowed the two west-side homes to be built where it one day would need to string lines. They don't know where they'll take their business or how they'll be able to sell their property if the city installs power lines.

It would cost \$1.7 million to relocate the homes, according to the city's estimate, and City Attorney Gerald Kinghorn argued it would cost less to simply install the poles along the road's east side.

Attorney Ray Zoll, who represents another landowner who owns a 5-acre lot on the east side of the road, said he is tired of seeing people who simply can't afford to defend themselves get "ramrodded" and forced to accept whatever price they can get for their land.

The city is offering his client about \$3,000 for the 75-foot-parcel.

Said Zoll: "We're offended by the amount. Doesn't the Constitution provide personal-property rights?"

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